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Director of
Central
Intelligence

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National Intelligence Daily

*Wednesday
19 March 1980*

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CO NID 80-066JX

19 MARCH 1980

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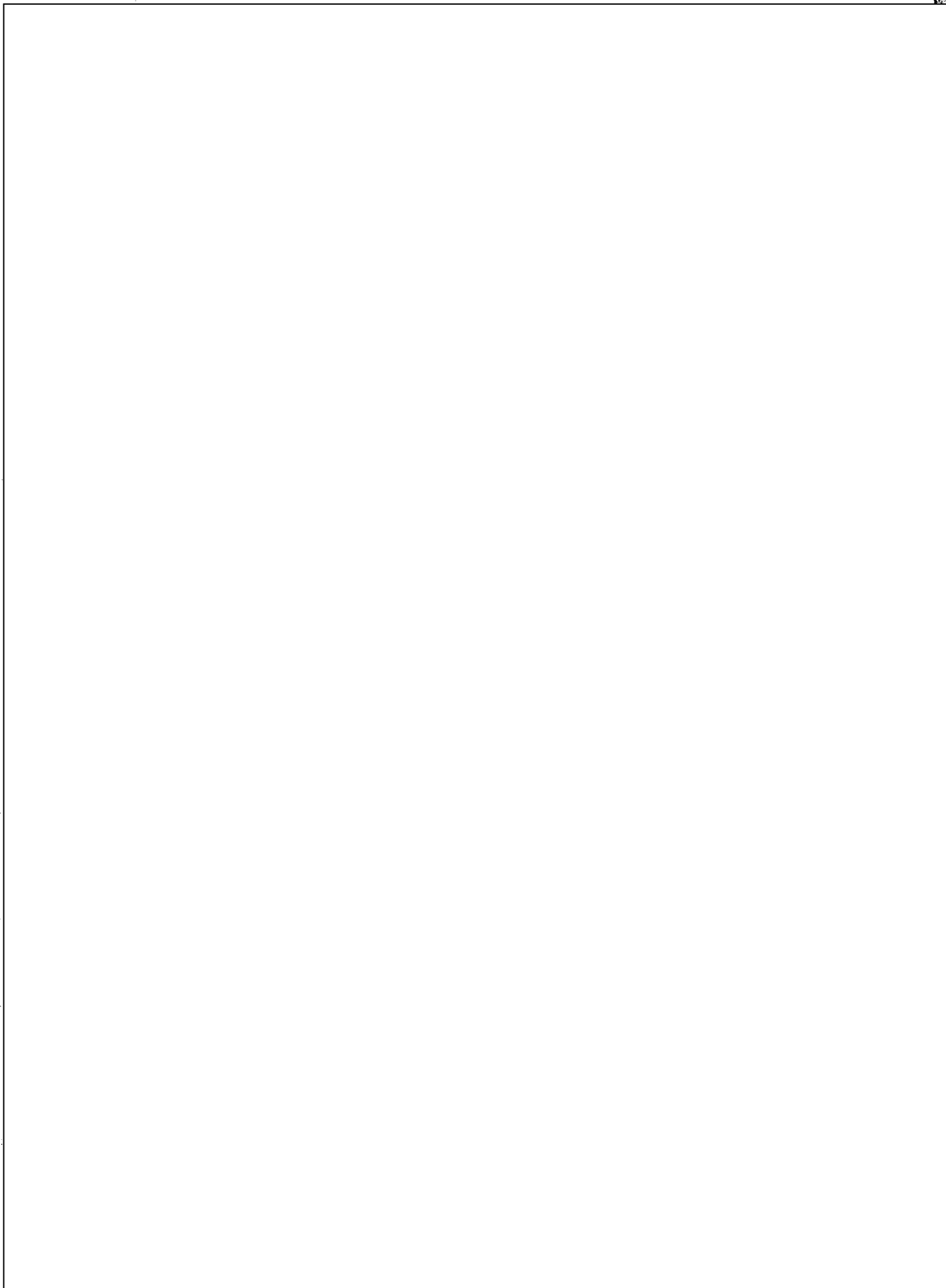
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IRAN: Election Results

President Bani-Sadr's supporters are continuing to fare poorly in the legislative elections. In Tehran, where 30 seats are at stake, 13 candidates have won first-round victories. Four are members of the hardline Islamic Republic Party, two are independents who oppose Bani-Sadr, one supports the radical Mujahedin, and four are independents with no known ties to either the President or his opponents. Only two winners in the capital are likely to back Bani-Sadr in the Assembly. National results may not be announced until after the New Year holidays which start on Friday; widespread charges of irregularities and fraud may further postpone a final counting.

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SPECIAL ANALYSIS

IRAN: Recent Communist Activity

While the weak central government remains preoccupied with the hostage crisis, pro-Soviet political groups continue to expand their influence in Iran. The Iranian Communists are still far from ready to challenge Ayatollah Khomeini directly, but they are working their way into increasingly stronger positions.

Moscow probably sees its best option for now as one of attempting to curry favor with the current regime and of encouraging its anti-Western stance.

The pro-Soviet Communist Tudeh (Masses) Party operates openly and portrays itself as the junior partner in a coalition with Khomeini--almost certainly with Moscow's endorsement or direction. The Ayatollah, who is strongly anti-Communist, appears willing to tolerate the Tudeh as long as it backs him and he judges it to be weak. President Bani-Sadr has become increasingly critical of Tudeh activities and is apparently more inclined to crack down on the party, although he has not yet taken any significant steps against it.

Estimates of Tudeh membership range from less than 5,000 to 35,000. The party has little mass appeal because of its well-known subservience to Moscow.

At this point, the Tudeh could probably come to power only if the government collapsed or if the party led a military takeover along the lines of the coup in Afghanistan in April 1978. To survive, a Tudeh regime would require massive Soviet support, including military intervention.

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Iran's other leftist parties--the Islamic Mujahedin guerrillas and the Marxist Fedayeen--have consistently rebuffed Tudeh offers to form a broad national coalition. Both groups claim to be independent of Moscow, but both probably have been infiltrated to some extent by Tudeh supporters. In any case, both operate closely with the various minority groups and contribute to keeping the Tehran government weak and off balance.

Involvement with Minorities

Regime officials suspect that the Soviets are deeply involved in ethnic dissidence throughout Iran, despite Soviet and Tudeh declarations that they favor peaceful resolution of Iran's ethnic conflicts. All of the leading ethnic dissident groups are leftist, leftist allies, or vulnerable to leftists. The best organized have long had contacts with the USSR or its intermediaries.

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Iranian officials are also concerned that the Soviets may be increasing their activities among the Baluchis in southwestern Iran. We have no direct evidence of such activity, but several Baluchi dissident groups have long had contacts with the Soviets and are likely to seek aid from the Soviet forces in Afghanistan.



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